

The Power of Independence

2 MINUTE READ

Ellen Ratcliffe

Let's face it, we live in an age defined by choice and complexity, and whilst this can sometimes feel overwhelming, effective decision-making is not simply going for the easiest, closest most familiar option. We strongly believe the principle of independence should stand at the forefront of your decision-making process.

What do we mean by independence?

We see the principle of independence being defined as "the freedom from external influence, conflicts of interest, or hidden agendas that could affect the quality, objectivity, or integrity of the services being offered".

Why does independence matter?

- **Solutions tailored to your needs** – we are solely focused on what's uniquely right for our clients without being distracted by competing commercial pressures or a centralised 'house view.'
- **Transparency** - clearer vision on pricing, risks, and potential outcomes.
- **Trust** – knowing you are receiving an unbiased view and recommendation, which in turn fosters confidence and collaboration.
- **Potential conflicts of interest** – eliminating these means you can rely more fully on the recommendations you receive.
- **Improved outcomes** - being guided by unbiased advice to reach effective, sustainable outcomes.

How we deliver value through our independence: A look at outsourced pensions management.

Our ownership structure enables true independence. A quick snapshot of the advantages we believe this brings through one of our service propositions, Outsourced Pensions Management, is outlined below:

- Our responsibilities are clear. We sit alongside you, with your interests first and foremost in our minds. **Our clients take priority.**
- We maintain a **genuinely objective** view. This leaves us free to focus on achieving the best outcomes for you.
- We maintain **operational transparency**, ensuring policies and processes are recorded and maintained, so that our clients have clarity about all aspects of the scheme's operation. We work with the advisers and service providers to help to ensure their reporting is clear, and without ambiguity. We ensure that budget forecasts are clear, assumptions behind them are understood and appropriately challenged and expenditure tracked closely against those forecasts. This gives you sight of how the scheme is being run, **freeing you to focus on your priorities**, confident that the operational activities are working well.

- We are not in direct competition with your other advisers for services they provide so those advisers tend to be more open and franker with us and that helps us to more easily get to the root of issues and reach solutions in a **pragmatic and timely** way.
- Our independence fosters **independence of thought**. We're unfettered by the views and influence of others. What this means to clients is transparent and straightforward dialogue, which is solely focused on their unique needs.

Combining quality with independence

Independence doesn't guarantee quality. You also need the credentials and the depth and breadth of experience, which we pride ourselves on at Muse. Our people join us because independence is important to them. It enables us to do the right thing, even when no one is looking. Independence provides you with a further critical layer of assurance - **it's your safeguard that the advice or service you receive isn't silently serving someone else's agenda, either consciously or sub-consciously.** 🕒

"We see independence as a vital part of effective decision making that is here to stay and in an ever more conflicted market, will receive increased focus going forward" - Ellen Ratcliffe